Planting of trees near Mining areas

2156. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the 'Times of India' dated 8th February, 1988 to the effect that the Himalayan Research Group made a plea for planting of pine and cedar trees especially near the mining areas; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal and the action taken/proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The policy of Government is to induce the beneficiaries of mining/quarring rights in forest lands to revegetate the area in accordance with established forestry pratices. Pine and cedar trees can, however, be planted only in a narrow belt in the Himalayas. Therefore, with a view to conduct studies in all aspects of mining environment, Government have sanctioned setting up of a Centre of Mining Environment at the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad.

Looting of Bombay-Bhagalpur Janata Express

2157. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some outlaws in uniform recently looted the train passengers of Bombay-Bhagalpur Janata Express near Satna as reported in the 'Times of India' dated the 8th February, 1988 and if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether similar incidents had taken place earlier on any of the Railways and if so, the details thereof during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The details of the incident referred to are being collected from the Government of Madhya Pradesh and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) Cases of crime on Railways are reported to, registered and investigated by the State Governments agencies including Government Railway Police which functiosn under the control of the State Governments. Figures of looting in trains are not compiled by the Central agencies.

Ban on the use of wooden packing cases for fruits

2158. SHRI J. P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some States have imposed a ban on the use of wooden packing cases for fruits so as to preserve forest wealth;

(b) if so, the names of those States;

(c) what measures the Central Government have taken to impose restrictions on the use of wooden packing cases for fruits by the fruit merchants in various States so as to preserve forest wealth; and

(d) what other measures the Central Government comtemplate to preserve the forest wealth of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) A law specificially banning the use of wooden packing cases for fruits has not been framed by the Central Government or the State Governments.

(c) The Government are promoting the use of alternate packaging material for wooden packing cases for fruits. The kraft paper required for making cartons for packing apple has been exempted from the levy of excise duty.

(d) The following measures have been taken by the Government to check deforestation:—

1. National Wastelands Development Board was set up in 1985 with the object of bringing 5 million hectares of land every year under fuelwoid and fodder plantation.